

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 02208 261349 Z

45

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W  
----- 021151

R 260848 Z MAR 73  
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3243  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 2208  
EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MASS, MCAP, LA, TH, MARR

SUBJECT: THAI VOLUNTEERS

REF: ( A ) STATE 053758

( B ) BANGKOK 4523

1. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO COMMENT ON BANGKOK 4523 FOR, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT, AND AN INDICATION OF ENEMY INTENTIONS IN LAOS, WE CANNOT AT THIS TIME FORESEE PRECISELY WHEN THE THAI VOLUNTEERS WILL BE LEAVING LAOS. AS OF THE MOMENT, I BELIEVE THAT WE ALL AGREE THAT THE THAI VOLUNTEER WITHDRAWAL FROM LAOS SHOULD BE COINCIDENT WITH CLEAR INDICATIONS OF AN NVA WITHDRAWAL. NO REENLISTMENTS ARE CURRENTLY BEING PERMITTED, NOR IS ANY RECRUIT TRAINING BEING CONDUCTED. FURTHER, EVEN IF RECRUITING AND TRAINING WERE UNDERWAY AT THIS TIME, THE THAI BATTALIONS IN LAOS CANNOT BE AUGMENTED AT THIS TIME UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF PARAGRAPH 3 D OF THE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT OF 22 FEBRUARY 1973. I THEREFORE BELIEVE IT IS NOT, REPEAT NOT, REALISTIC TO ASSUME A THIRTY BATTALION ( APPROXIMATELY 550 MEN STRONG ) FORCE WILL BE IN EXISTENCE BY THE TIME THE THAI ARE WITHDRAWN FROM LAOS, I. E., FORMATION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT DAY PLUS SIXTY DAYS.

2. REGARDLESS OF THE TIMING OF THE FORMATION OF THE NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT DURING THE NEXT SIXTY DAYS, THE FOLLOWING FIGURES, BASED ON THE BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US, SHOW THE ATTRITION OF THE THAI FORCE FROM CONTRACT EXPIRATION ALONE OVER THE NEXT NINE MONTHS:

END	END 1 ST	END 2 ND	END 3 RD
PRESENT	FY 73	QTR FY 74	QTR FY 74

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENTI 02208 261349 Z

INFANTRY	15789	13400	10480	650	0
ARTILLERY	1279	550	120	120	0
HEAVY					
WEAPONS	740	550	470	0	0
TOTAL	17808	14500	11070	770	0

FROM THESE FIGURES, IT IS APPARENT THAT A SIZEABLE FORCE MIGHT BE MAINTAINED THROUGH OCTOBER 1973 ALLOWING A HIGH DEGREE OF RESPONSIVENESS THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD. THESE STRENGTHS AND THE EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN A NUMBER OF COMBAT UNITS AND CADRES THAT COULD BE TASKED FOR ANY NUMBER OF CONTINGENCIES WITHOUT TYING THE FORCE TO ANY SPECIFIC NUMBER OR TYPES OF UNITS WITH SPECIFIC STRENGTHS.

3. HENCE WE SUGGEST AS A REASONABLE SOLUTION AFFORDING THE MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY TO ALL CONCERNED:

- A. THAT THE AUTHORIZED FORCE LEVEL FOR THAI SGU'S REMAIN AT 30 BATTALIONS THROUGH FIRST QUARTER 1974.
- B. THAT DURING THIS PERIOD WE PERMIT TOTAL FORCE LEVEL TO BE REDUCED THROUGH CONTRACT EXPIRATION.
- C. THAT WE CONTINUE CURRENT POLICY OF NO RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL INTO THE PROGRAM BUT IF CONTINGENCY ARISES DURING PERIOD PRIOR 1 NOVEMBER RECRUITMENT COULD COMMENCE TO FLESH OUT FORCE TO FULL STRENGTH.

4. CONCERNING THE EQUIPMENT, I FORESEE NO OVERRIDING PROBLEMS, PROVIDED WASHINGTON APPROVES THE TRANSFER TO THAILAND OF THE EQUIPMENT IN LAOS BEING USED BY THE THAIS. THE ONLY ITEMS THAT I BELIEVE MUST BE RETAINED IN LAOS ARE TWELVE 105 MM HOWITZERS, FIFTEEN 3/4 TON TRUCKS, AND NINETEEN 1/4 TON TRUCKS WHICH ARE PROVIDED FOR FAR IN OUR FY 1974 PROGRAMMED RLGAFF FORCE STRUCTURE. I WOULD HOPE THAT THAI WILL NOT OBJECT TOO STRONGLY, PARTICULARLY AS THE RESIDUAL THAI FORCE WOULD RETAIN THE SIXTEEN 155 MM HOWITZERS THAT THEY ARE USING IN LAOS AND THE OTHER EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING HEAVY WEAPONS, VALUED AT OVER \$4,000,000.

5. AS SEEN FROM VIENTIANE, AFTER 30 JUNE THE FUNDING PROBLEM WILL BE PARAMOUNT, BUT A RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM MUST COME FROM THE WASHINGTON LEVEL.

GODLEY

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER MR. VIETS, S/S-O.

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PAGE 03 VIENTI 02208 261349 Z

SECRET

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* EXDIS

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 26 MAR 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973VIENTI02208  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** VIENTIANE  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19730340/aaaaikif.tel  
**Line Count:** 119  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 73 STATE 053758, 73 BANGKOK 4523  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 DEC 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980106  
**Subject:** THAI VOLUNTEERS  
**TAGS:** MARR, MASS, MCAP, PINS, LA, TH  
**To:** SECSTATE WASHDC  
**SS INFO BANGKOK**  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005